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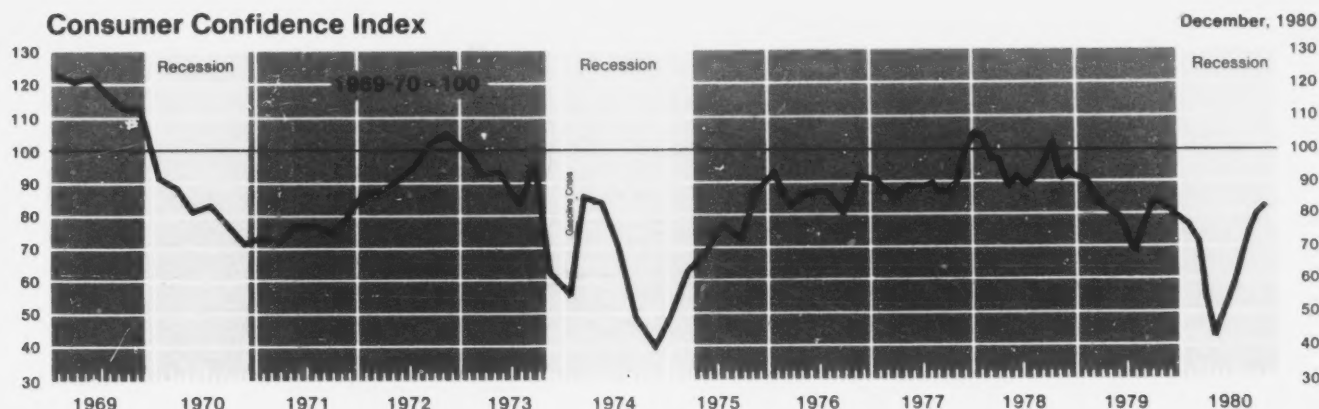
Consumer Attitudes and Buying Plans



A Monthly Report from The Conference Board

Based on a Survey Conducted by National Family Opinion, Inc.

Consumer Confidence Index



CONSUMERS SLIGHTLY MORE OPTIMISTIC SPENDING PLANS UNCHANGED

Consumer confidence was up again in November, but the improvement was rather subdued. The Board's Confidence Index (1969-1970 = 100) edged up to 83.4 for a gain of about three points, following a similarly stingy rise the month before. Buying plans are unchanged on balance.

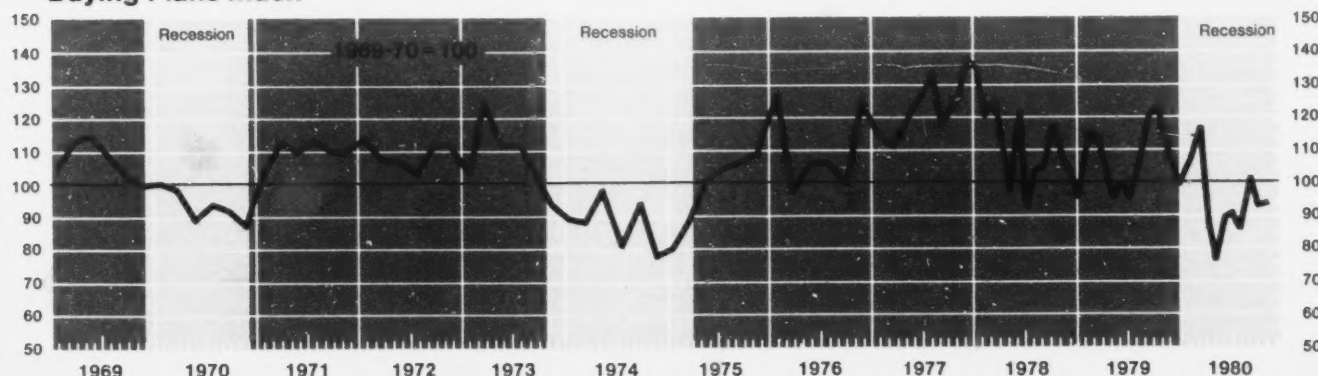
In reviewing ongoing conditions, consumers were more positive than last time and more hopeful in their expectations for the months ahead. But in all instances the gains were marginal, and were accounted for largely by a decline in the number of those who expressed pessimistic views rather than by any significant increase in optimistic opinions. In short, while on balance confidence continues to rise, the recent gains have been too small to be reassuring. Still, as compared to last year at this time, the proportion of those who expect business and employment conditions to improve in the months ahead is significantly larger.

Plans to buy did not change very much in the past month. Intentions to purchase an automobile and interest in major appliances were both fractionally higher but the gains were too small to be significant. Plans to acquire a home were unchanged. However, all buying intentions—cars, homes and major appliances—are substantially below year-ago levels.

The leveling of consumer enthusiasm parallels the recent reacceleration of inflation and the rise in interest rates. Certainly the higher cost of money has reduced the consumers' capacity and inclination to purchase durables and homes. More broadly, rising prices and taxes have added up to an erosion in the real disposable income available to the average household. Nevertheless, consumers are substantially more optimistic in their expectations for the months ahead than they were this time last year, which suggests that Christmas business may be reasonably lively.

Fabian Linden

Buying Plans Index



All data seasonally adjusted

Consumer Expectations and Intentions

Based on surveys conducted by National Family Opinion, Inc.
Percentage of all households

	1979		1980										
All series seasonally adjusted	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.(r)	Nov.(p)
Composite Series: Index Numbers, 1969-1970 = 100													
Consumer Confidence Index	83.0	80.8	79.1	76.4	71.5	52.9	42.1	48.6	59.4	66.4	76.2	80.2	83.4
Present Situation	93.8	93.8	91.1	85.6	79.6	63.9	38.5	34.6	37.5	36.9	48.0	48.7	50.7
Expectations	75.8	72.1	71.1	70.3	66.1	45.5	44.4	58.0	73.9	86.1	95.0	101.3	105.2
Buying Plans Index	113.4	107.2	99.2	107.0	116.4	85.4	76.2	89.9	90.2	85.7	100.4	93.8	94.2
Appraisal of Present Situation: Percent													
Business Conditions													
Good	25.0	25.9	25.8	23.2	22.3	17.4	11.8	12.5	13.1	12.9	16.9	16.1	16.2
Bad	14.4	14.4	14.2	16.6	20.0	25.2	37.0	39.4	37.4	37.8	31.3	30.3	29.1
Normal	60.0	59.7	60.0	60.2	57.7	57.4	51.2	48.1	49.5	49.3	51.8	53.6	54.7
Employment													
Jobs plentiful	21.7	21.4	19.9	20.2	20.5	16.2	10.4	9.0	9.8	9.7	11.2	11.7	11.8
Jobs not so plentiful	53.9	53.9	54.2	52.9	50.0	52.3	50.4	48.5	46.8	46.6	48.5	49.0	51.6
Jobs hard to get	24.4	24.7	25.9	26.9	29.5	31.5	39.2	44.5	43.4	43.7	40.3	39.3	36.6
Expectations for Six Months Hence: Percent													
Business Conditions													
Better	15.7	14.5	13.6	13.0	12.6	8.6	9.5	15.0	18.8	22.2	25.6	23.9	25.9
Worse	21.1	21.7	22.0	21.6	25.3	42.7	40.2	33.9	22.6	19.0	13.8	12.1	9.7
Same	63.2	63.8	64.4	65.4	62.1	48.7	50.3	51.1	58.6	58.0	60.6	64.0	64.4
Employment													
More jobs	13.7	13.0	12.3	11.8	10.9	6.5	7.1	12.4	15.8	18.9	20.6	21.3	21.2
Fewer jobs	28.7	31.1	30.5	29.7	31.7	46.6	47.5	40.9	28.7	25.4	20.7	17.6	16.1
Same	57.6	55.9	57.2	58.5	57.4	46.9	45.4	46.7	55.5	55.7	58.7	61.1	62.7
Income													
Increase	33.6	33.7	36.6	34.2	34.7	30.2	24.3	28.6	27.4	32.5	31.7	32.2	31.8
Decrease	6.4	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.6	11.7	12.9	12.9	11.1	8.3	9.5	6.5	6.9
Same	60.0	59.1	56.2	58.5	57.7	58.1	62.8	58.5	61.5	59.2	58.8	61.3	61.3
Plans to Buy Within Six Months: Percent													
Automobile													
Yes	8.0	7.8	7.7	8.2	9.6	6.3	6.0	6.6	6.7	6.0	7.4	6.8	7.1
New	4.5	4.2	4.1	5.0	5.3	3.6	3.1	3.8	3.2	2.9	4.2	3.8	3.8
Used	2.9	3.3	2.9	2.8	3.9	2.3	2.7	2.6	3.3	2.7	2.7	2.6	3.1
Uncertain	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.2
Home													
Yes	3.7	3.4	2.5	3.2	2.9	2.2	2.0	3.0	2.8	2.7	3.0	2.8	2.7
New	1.2	1.0	0.5	0.9	0.9	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.9
Lived in	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.0
Uncertain	0.8	1.0	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.7	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.8
Major appliances													
Total plans	31.0	30.5	28.5	29.0	32.2	27.2	21.5	23.3	25.2	25.7	28.9	26.4	26.8
Refrigerator	4.4	4.0	4.3	4.0	4.5	3.1	2.7	3.3	3.5	3.7	4.5	3.3	3.5
Washing machine	4.4	4.1	3.6	3.6	4.3	3.9	2.7	3.4	3.7	3.2	4.1	3.1	3.6
Black and white TV	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4
Color TV	6.5	7.2	6.5	6.4	7.0	6.6	5.0	5.4	6.2	6.5	6.7	5.9	5.8
Vacuum cleaner	5.4	5.4	4.7	5.5	6.3	5.2	4.1	3.9	4.4	4.2	5.0	5.1	4.7
Range	3.7	3.3	3.3	2.9	3.2	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.6	3.0	2.5	2.5
Clothes dryer	3.6	3.8	3.1	3.1	3.4	3.2	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.9
Air conditioner	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.3	2.1	2.4
Carpet	12.1	10.7	10.9	10.0	12.1	9.1	9.1	9.4	8.0	8.6	10.3	11.3	9.9
Vacation Intended Within Six Months: Percent													
Vacation Intended		46.7		43.6		43.0		43.7		42.9		46.2	
Destination													
Home state		10.4		11.1		10.0		10.6		11.0		11.2	
Other states		33.0		29.4		29.9		29.4		28.2		32.5	
Foreign country		4.5		4.3		3.9		4.3		4.5		4.1	
Means of Travel													
Automobile		33.1		30.2		29.9		31.5		31.2		34.3	
Airplane		13.1		13.4		13.8		12.3		11.2		12.0	
Other		2.5		2.6		2.6		3.6		2.7		2.9	

Note: All 1979 data have been adjusted to reflect that year's revised seasonal factors.

(p)—preliminary (r)—revised

Please Note: In the interest of speeding the data contained in this publication to you, these series are now available on-line through The Conference Board Data Base. For more information, contact Linette Stein at (212) 759-0900.

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